GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
WATER RESOURCES
LOK SABHA

STARRED QUESTION NO:348
ANSWERED ON:21.03.2013
DECLINING GROUND WATER LEVEL
Sharma Shri Jagdish;Singh Shri Bhupendra

Will the Minister of WATER RESOURCES be pleased to state:

(a) whether the ground water level is depleting across the country;

(b) if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor, State/UT-wise;

(c) whether the Government proposes to formulate a national level programme for ground water conservation in view of the depleting water table;

(d) if so, the details thereof and if not, the reasons therefor; and

(e) the other steps taken/being taken by the Government to address the issue?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF WATER RESOURCES (SHRI HARISH RAWAT)

(a) to (e) A Statement is laid on the Table of the House.

STATEMENT REFERRED TO IN REPLY TO PARTS (a) TO (e) OF STARRED QUESTION NO. â€ 348 TO BE ANSWERED ON 21.03.2013 IN LOK SABHA REGARDING "DECLINING GROUND WATER LEVEL" ASKED BY SHRI JAGDISH SHARMA AND SHRI BHOOPENDRA SINGH, M.Ps, LOK SABHA:

(a) Yes Madam, ground water levels are depleting in some parts of the Country. As per the data collected by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB), more than 55% of the wells monitored by CGWB in the Country registered a declining trend in ground water levels.

(b) CGWB monitors ground water levels on regional scale through a network of observation wells located throughout the Country. Water levels are monitored four times a year during the months of January, April/May, August and November. Ground Water level data analyzed from 11024 wells for pre- monsoon period during the last five years indicate that water levels are declining in the major part of the Country. The States/UTs which have registered ground water declining trends in more than 55% of the wells during the last five years are; Andhra Pradesh, Bihar, Chandigarh, NCT of Delhi, Himachal Pradesh, Jharkhand, Kerala, Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh and West Bengal. The State-wise details are given in Annexure-I. As per the Ground Water Resources Assessment carried out jointly with respective State Governments, taking 2009 as the base year, it is observed that the overall stage of ground water development in the Country has reached 61%. However, the stage of ground water development in the States of Delhi, Gujarat, Haryana, Punjab, Rajasthan, Tamil Nadu, Daman & Diu and Pondicherry is higher than 75%. Out of 5842 assessment units, 802 fall in the 'Over-exploited' category, 169 in 'Critical' and 523 in 'Semi-critical' category. The details are given in Annexure-II. Extensive use of ground water for irrigation purposes and indiscriminate use by industries is a major reason for declining of ground water levels.

(c) The Central Government promotes water conservation measures in the Country by supplementing the efforts of the State Government for augmentation, conservation and efficient management of water resources by way of technical and financial support through various schemes.

(d) CGWB has prepared a master plan for artificial recharge to ground water. The Master Plan for Artificial Recharge to Ground Water is a conceptual document containing State-wise details of feasibility of artificial recharge through various types of structures suitable to the local conditions in the respective States/Union Territories. The plan takes into consideration the existing ground water conditions in the respective States /UTs, long term ground water level behavior, the geomorphology of the area as well as the experience gathered during Pilot projects taken up under Demonstrative Artificial Recharge schemes in various parts of the Country.

(e) Steps taken by the Government to address the above problems of ground water depletion, inter alia, include:-

(i) Extending technical and financial support to States/UTs under schemes such as Accelerated Benefits Irrigation Programme, Command Area Development and Water Management, Repair, Renovation and Restoration of Water Bodies for conservation of water resources in the Country;

(ii) Setting up the National Water Mission with the objective of conservation of water;

(iii) Circulation of a Model bill by Ministry of Water Resources to all the States/UTs to enable them to enact ground water legislation for its regulation, development and conservation; and

(iv) Advisory by Central Ground Water Authority (CGWA) to all the Chief Secretaries of States and Administrators of Union Territories, having 'Over-exploited' blocks, to take measures to promote/adopt artificial recharge to ground water /rain water harvesting.